

Glenda Wiles

From: Stone-Manning, Tracy (Tester) [Tracy_Stone-Manning@tester.senate.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 16, 2008 3:35 PM
To: Glenda Wiles
Subject: SRS and PILT
Attachments: approps_letter.pdf

Commissioners,

I have attached a letter Senator Tester and others signed on to, urging the appropriations committee in the Senate to include Secure Rural Schools and PILT funding in an upcoming supplemental spending bill. We continue to push on this, but it remains difficult. I'll keep you posted.

Regards,
Tracy

Tracy Stone-Manning
Missoula Field Director
Senator Jon Tester
130 W Front
Missoula, MT 59802
406-728-3606 Direct Line
406-728-3003

7/16/2008

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 16, 2008

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Colleagues:

As you develop an emergency supplemental appropriations bill to fund critical government programs, we appeal to you to include the language of Senate Amendment 709 to reauthorize and fully fund a four-year extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-393) ("county payments program") and fully fund the Payments in Lieu of Taxes Program ("PILT").

The Senate recognized that the bipartisan proposal would provide a necessary economic safety net to thousands of counties across the country, and it passed the Senate by a 74-23 vote on last year's supplemental appropriations bill. Unfortunately, despite the overwhelming support for the proposal, only one year of funding for the county payments program was enacted in the conferenced version of last year's emergency supplemental bill. One year of funding was also included in the Senate-passed version of the previous emergency supplemental passed earlier this year, but was not included in the final version of the bill.

The PILT program supports more than 1,900 counties in 49 States across the country, and the county payments program, and funding for it, is vital to the survival of over 775 rural counties and 4,400 schools near national forests in 42 states across the country. A number of counties and schools around the country have already sent out hundreds of pink slips notifying employees of layoffs that will become permanent if the county payments program is not reauthorized. The thousands of counties and schools that rely on these programs currently are facing even further economic challenges. The dramatic downturn in the real estate market has had a particularly acute impact on local budgets. It is thus even more urgent today than it was last year to provide counties with both the immediate support and the ability to plan a long-term recovery strategy that the four-year extension would provide. Without reauthorization of and funding for these programs, the predicament will be an emergency without rescue for hundreds and hundreds of counties across America.

We very much appreciated your support for this proposal last year, and look forward to working with you again this year to finally enact it into law.

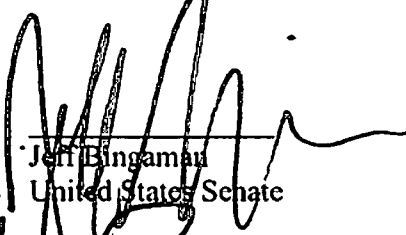
Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senate



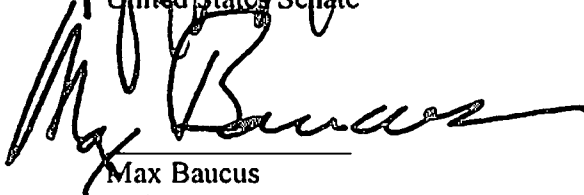
Mike Crapo
United States Senate



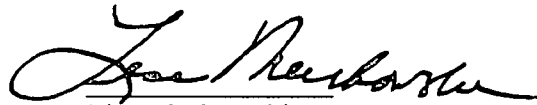
Jeff Bingaman
United States Senate



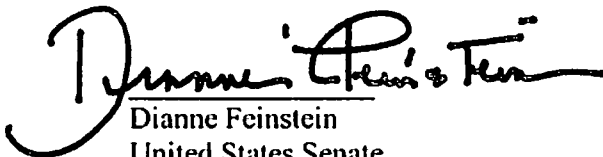
Ted Stevens
United States Senate



Max Baucus
United States Senate



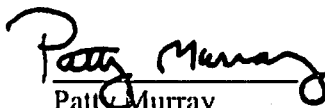
Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate



Roger Wicker
United States Senate



Patty Murray
United States Senate



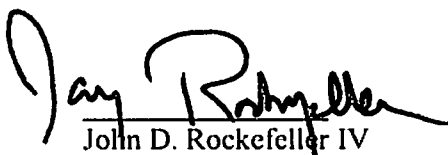
Gordon H. Smith
United States Senate



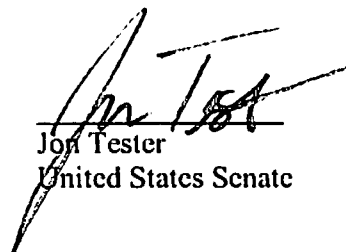
Maria Cantwell
United States Senate



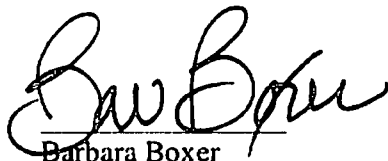
Robert Bennett
United States Senate



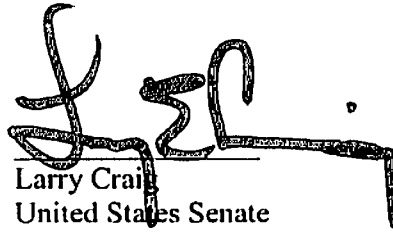
John D. Rockefeller IV
United States Senate



Jon Tester
United States Senate



Barbara Boxer
United States Senate



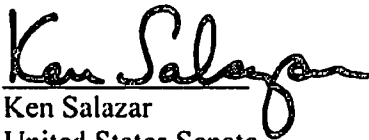
Larry Craig
United States Senate



Carl Levin
United States Senate



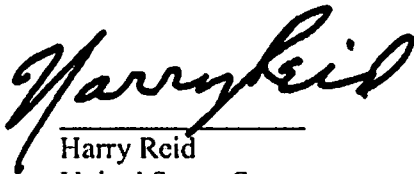
Bill Nelson
United States Senate



Ken Salazar
United States Senate



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate



Harry Reid
United States Senate